

Attachment D (Clean)

For the Examiner's convenience, all pending claims are shown below in marked-up form. Unamended claims are shown in small font.

1. (Amended) A method of using a communication network so that a large multitude of users may simultaneously compete in a skill-based contest as contestants, comprising:
- a. identifying a large multitude of contestants;
 - b. grouping the contestants into group subsets according to group criteria;
 - c. matching contestants within the group subsets into subcompetitions;
 - d. for each subcompetition, presenting a competition task over the communication network to the contestants of the subcompetitions;
 - e. monitoring responses to the competition task from each subcompetition and determining a subcompetition outcome status of each contestant in the subcompetition;
 - f. grouping at least some of the contestants according to at least one of the group criteria or subcompetition outcome status;
 - g. repeating acts (c)-(f) until there is a unique winner of the contest wherein the contest begins for all contestants at a fixed start time and converges to the unique winner in a fixed, short amount of time after the fixed start time.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the subcompetition outcome status includes at least the states win, lose, and tie.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the subcompetition tasks are presented in act (d) substantially simultaneously.

4. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the competition task is delivered from a server node to contestant electronic nodes and wherein the method further comprises

contestant nodes timestamping the receipt of the competition task, and delivering timing information to a server node in conjunction with contestant responses to the competition task;

the server node analyzing the contestant responses and timing information and determining therefrom competition task successes and elapsed time of successes so that the server node may determine the quickness of contestants independently of the performance of the communication network relative to the contestant nodes.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the competition tasks are presented substantially simultaneously.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the server node enforces a time deadline for the receipt of response.

7. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein contestants respond to the competition task within a certain time established by contest rules and enforced by a server node, for the server node to consider the contestant response as valid.

8. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein contestants respond to the competition task within a certain time established by contest rules and enforced by a server node, for the server node to consider the contestant response as valid and wherein contestant response information is recorded to create contestant profile information.

9. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein contestants respond to the competition task within a certain time established by contest rules and enforced by a server node, for the server node to consider the contestant response as valid and wherein contestant response information is recorded to compile demographic information.

10. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein contestants respond to the competition task within a certain time established by contest rules and enforced by a server node, for the server node to consider the contestant response as valid and wherein contestant response information is recorded to compile demographic information.

11. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein contestants respond to the competition task within a certain time established by contest rules and enforced by a server node, for the server node to consider the contestant response as valid and wherein contestant response information is recorded to compile psychographic information.

12. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein contestants respond to the competition task within a certain time established by contest rules and enforced by a server node, for the server node to consider the contestant response as valid and wherein prizes are awarded to contestants.

13. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein contestants respond to the competition task within a certain time established by contest rules and enforced by a server node, for the server node to consider the contestant response as valid and wherein prizes are awarded to contestants and wherein the prizes include click-on electronic coupons.

14. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein contestants respond to the competition task within a certain time established by contest rules and enforced by a server node, for the server node to consider the contestant response as valid and wherein prizes are awarded to contestants and wherein the prizes include click-on electronic coupons and wherein user activation of a click-on electronic coupon is user response information.

15. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein contestants respond to the competition task within a certain time established by contest rules and enforced by a server node, for the server node to consider the contestant response as valid and wherein the competition tasks include branded questions.

16. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein contestants respond to the competition task within a certain time established by contest rules and enforced by a server node, for the server node to consider the contestant response as valid and wherein the contests awards points to users based upon their responses, and these points are redeemable for prizes.

17. (Amended) A method of using a communication network so that a large multitude of users may simultaneously compete in a skill-based contest as contestants, comprising:

- a. presenting competition tasks to contestants;
- b. collecting responses to the competition tasks from the contestants;
- c. analyze the responses to create user profile information about user preference, interests, or contestant competition task performance.

18. (Amended) A method of using a communication network so that a large multitude of users may simultaneously compete in a skill-based contest as contestants, comprising:

- a. presenting competition tasks to contestants;
- b. analyzing contestant responses;
- c. creating a unique signature for each contestant indicative of at least some of the contestant's response.